

Year of the Eucharist

October 2004 to October 2005

Part 41 in a series on
The Year of the Eucharist
from the
Department of Worship & Spiritual Life
Catholic Diocese of Memphis
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The Structure of the Mass The Liturgy of the Eucharist

THE COMMUNION RITE

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The purpose of the *Prayer After Communion* is to ask God “for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated” (*G.I.R.M. #89*). If we have participated in the liturgy fully, consciously and actively, by the time we come to the *Prayer After Communion*, we have a good idea of what those “fruits of the mystery” are for us at this particular time and place in our lives. Remembering that during the Celebration of the Eucharist, God speaks to us as a people and as individuals, we might use the silence before this prayer to recollect God’s message to us in Word and in Sacrament.

At the priest’s words, “Let us pray,” all stand. This is not the time to gather our personal belongings, or dress our children for the outdoors, search for car keys, skim the bulletin, or any of the other numerous tasks that communicate to ourselves and to others that we are finished praying. The presider says, “Let us pray” and that is precisely what this time is for – praying!

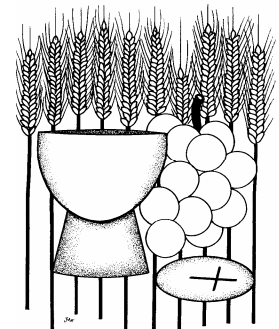
The busyness of the world in which we live has taken its toll, often in ways beyond our consciousness. One of the consequences of our fast-paced lives is that we are always getting ready for the next thing. While this may be necessary in some aspects of our lives, we cannot allow this frenzy for readiness to consume our entire lives. If we do, we stand to lose the treasure of what God is doing in us and around us in the present moment.

Example: When you go to a movie, do you prepare to leave as soon as it is obvious that the end is near? Do you try to be among the first to leave the theatre and the parking lot? Do you ever just relax and watch the credits and listen to the final measures of the music? Did you ever ask yourself, “Why am I in such a hurry to leave? Do the three or five minutes I sit in traffic in the parking lot really make a big difference? Am I running from one event to another only to arrive and then frantically anticipate the next?”

The *Prayer After Communion* is not a subtle signal to get ready to leave the church. It is a prayer asking God that each person present will go out and be the body of Christ in a world that desperately needs God. This prayer is not just a “wrapping-up” of the Mass; it is a sincere petition that God will be with us as we go forth to live the life God has given us to live – to live through Christ, with Christ and in Christ.

At the end of the Communion Rite, the presider issues the invitation: “Let us pray.” And so we quiet our busy insides and trust God with people and traffic and schedules and dinner and the entire day ahead because this time is for prayer. This time is exclusively for God and for God’s people.

Let us pray.



From the General Instruction on the Roman Missal

#89. To bring to completion the prayer of the People of God, and also to conclude the entire Communion Rite, the priest says the *Prayer after Communion*, in which he prays for the fruits of the mystery just celebrated....

...The people make the prayer their own by the acclamation, *Amen*.

Text: Judy Gray
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